

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 44, with the following amended:

2. Construction of Gantry

Referring now to the drawings and initially to FIGS. 1-3 in particular, a gantry 20 constructed in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the invention includes three ground-supported booms 2022, 24, and 26 functionally interconnected by a system of horizontal beams. The term "functionally interconnected" as used herein means that the beams are supported on the three booms 22, 24, and 26 to effectively form a unitary vehicle. However, all of the beams need not be supported directly on a boom at each end. Nor must the beams be directly connected to each other to form a triangle. In fact, in the illustrated embodiment in which the beam network consists of left and right lift beams 28 and 30 and a rear cross beam 32, the cross beam 32 is supported on the lift beams 28 and 30 somewhat in front of their rear ends rather than directly on the corresponding booms 24 and 26, and the front ends of the lift beams 28 and 30 do not converge at a true point. The expression "functionally interconnected" and its equivalents should therefore be construed broadly. (Similarly, terms such as "front," "rear," "longitudinal," "lateral," "left," "right," etc., as used herein, are used only as a frame of reference and are not intended to be limiting.)

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 7, with the following amended:

The left and right lift beams 28 and 30 could each comprise a conventional dimensionally invariable beam. In the illustrated embodiment, however, each of the beams 28 and 30 is configured to be extendible and retractable to vary the length of the machine 20. The beams 28 and 30 are shown in the extended state Fig. 2 and in solid lines in Fig. 1. They are shown in their retracted state in Fig. 3 and in phantom lines in Fig. 1. Extension and retraction is accommodated via the structure illustrated in Figs. 8 and 9, which illustrate the left lift beam 28, it being understood that the right lift beam 30 is of identical construction. The beam 28 includes a square inner tube 90 and front and rear square outer tubes 92, 94. Each of the outer tubes 92 and 94 surrounds the inner tube 90 and is telescopically extendible and retractable with respect to the inner tube 90. The rear end of the front outer tube 92 and the front end of the rear outer tube 94 preferably terminate in facing plates 96 and 98 that leave a gap 100 between them as seen in FIG. 3 when the beam 28 is fully retracted. The gap 100 leaves room on the beam 28 for the connection of rigging (not shown) to the inner tube 90 for coupling to a load “L” (Fig. 2).